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WORLD-POLITICS.

BERLIN: ST. PETERSBURG.

BERLIN, *April, 1907.*

THE few weeks of the session which preceded the Easter adjournment did not afford the new Reichstag many practical opportunities of giving a taste of its quality. Prince von Bülow's majority, composed of Conservatives, Liberals and Radicals, is theoretically master of the situation. The Centre, however, with a representation of 110 members out of 397, is sufficiently conscious of its strength and unanimity to be able to offer an effective opposition by merely assuming an attitude of passive resistance. The presence of this compact organization is not only inconvenient, but also extremely disquieting, to the Government, since it constitutes a permanent temptation to the weaker vessels among the majority to threaten defection unless their party claims are duly recognized. Thus upon several occasions the Radicals, whose fifty seats enable them to act as the tongue of the balance of parties in the House, have detached themselves from their Conservative and Liberal allies in order to throw their votes into the scale of opposition. No vital issues, it is true, have so far been involved; but the attitude of the Radicals is none the less significant, since it shows that they are prepared to pursue their own way, undeterred by considerations of Government policy. Even now it is evident that the controversial problems of legislation which await solution in the autumn are causing the Imperial Chancellor to view the future with considerable concern. The Radicals are seemingly impressed with the importance of the position which they occupy, and they have not been slow to formulate demands the fulfilment of which they consider to be due to their altered circumstances. The Conservatives, to whom the Radicals in many instances owe their success at the polls,

are naturally disinclined to encourage or support them in pressing their claims upon the notice of the Government. The left wing of the Conservative party, which aspires to be the connecting link between the Right and the non-Socialist Left, endeavors as far as possible to exert a moderating influence, but so far the efforts of the Free-Conservatives have met with little or no reward. The views on economic policy which are held by the Agrarian Conservatives are diametrically opposed to the principles which the Radicals have hitherto professed, and there seems but slight prospect of a profitable or even possible reconciliation of these widely differing points of view. Political compromises are notoriously unsatisfying, and there is no reason to believe that either the Radicals or the Conservatives would derive any permanent advantage from a complete or partial abandonment of material principles.

The debates have been conducted in much the same spirit in which the recent election campaign was fought, and the attitude of the various parties towards the Centre is distinguished by the same animosity which led to the *Bloc* vote of December 13th. The Radicals and the National Liberals, and in a less degree the Conservatives, are animated by a common desire to isolate the Centre, although the Radicals have shown that upon occasion they are capable of giving play to their political ambitions, irrespective of considerations of Parliamentary tactics. The Conservatives again are far too much in sympathy with the principles and traditions of the Centre to display uncompromising hostility towards a party which is still entitled to be regarded as an essential pillar of the existing order of society. In the face of this open and covert opposition, the Centre remains impassive. This waiting attitude on the part of the Centre may be fraught with some curious results. How long it will be able to play the part of the spectator depends, in large measure, upon the extent to which Prince von Bülow may be induced to give effect to his programme of social reform. Indications have already been afforded of a readiness on the part of the Centre to emerge from its reserve with proposals of its own. This, of course, is an inevitable concession to the democratic elements in its composition. Upon these occasions, the *Bloc* majority has hitherto been at pains to secure the rejection of the Centre's proposals, or to force upon the Government social schemes even

more "liberal" than those advanced by the Opposition. In those quarters in which too far-reaching developments in the sphere of social legislation are deprecated, the Parliamentary situation arouses manifold anxieties. The dissensions with which the Government *Bloc* has to contend in its own ranks are reflected, in a less acute degree, in the attitude of the various sections of the Centre among themselves; but, in the latter case, the difficulty of maintaining an unbroken front is not allowed to become so apparent. In reality the competition of the parties resolves itself into the attempts of two *Blocs* to impair each other's cohesion and stability. The Centre, however, is kept together by traditional bonds, which, in the case of the Government majority, are either entirely absent, or, if present, are supplied by purely adventitious considerations of expediency.

As a Parliamentary factor, the Social Democracy, in consequence of its heavy defeat at the elections, has become an almost negligible quantity. No party can afford to lose fifty per cent. of its seats in the national assembly without incurring a serious loss of prestige, not only in the country, but also among its own members. Divisions and dissensions are rife between the Revisionist and the Revolutionary wings of the Socialists, and the tactics of the party leaders are freely criticised. The controversy has been kept within strictly academic limits and its issue must for a long time remain undecided. It would, therefore, be going too far to say, or even to expect, that the day is at hand when the Revisionists will cast about for means of taking a positive and recognized share in the work of legislation. Whether the aspirations which are attributed to them, of becoming the extreme left wing of the Radical party, are capable of realization depends entirely upon the following which they are able to command. At present there are no signs of anything approaching a split in the ranks of the Social Democracy, and there is no doubt that Herr Bebel has intervened between the opposing factions with his usual authority. Those who profess to derive consolation from the fact that the Parliamentary representation of the Social Democracy has been very materially reduced appear to forget that the actual number of votes polled for the party at the elections showed a considerable increase. Thoughtful observers are disturbed by the reflection that, in process of time, this large body of electors may feel that its interests are not being adequately

represented, and in order to ventilate the grievances of the laboring masses may resort to the dreaded, if two-edged, weapon of the general strike. This consideration is undoubtedly present in the minds of many social reformers, but it is at least questionable whether indirect pressure of this kind furnishes the best incentive for promoting the cause which they profess to have at heart.

Complicated as the relations between the parties in the Empire are, the issue becomes positively confused when it is remembered that, in Prussia, the premier state of the federation, Prince von Bülow, who is at once Imperial Chancellor and Prussian Minister-President, is endeavoring to conduct his policy with the assistance of the Centre which he has excommunicated in the Reichstag. This dualism, however, is merely one of the side aspects of the situation, although it is perfectly capable of assuming an important shape in one or other of Prince von Bülow's spheres of activity. In all matters affecting the Army and Navy, and the Colonies, as well as in foreign policy, the Government is sanguine that the *Bloc* majority will prove trustworthy. There are, however, a number of questions in the domain of social and economic policy, the discussion of which is likely to impose a severe strain upon the loyalty of the *Bloc*. These questions, moreover, are far more serious from the Government point of view than purely patriotic issues, however "national" they may be, since the Centre is by no means opposed in principle to supporting demands for strengthening the defences of the Empire, but has merely vindicated the right of Parliamentary criticism.

The most urgent of the controversial questions is undoubtedly the reform of the Bourse Law of 1896. This law is essentially a class measure, and owes its enactment chiefly to the interested agitation of the Agrarians. Its most important provisions are those which restrict or altogether prohibit transactions in differences. The appointment of a State Commissary for the Bourse under the Act represents one of the most characteristic expressions of the doctrines of State Socialism which were so much in vogue in Germany during the last decade or two of the nineteenth century. A further innovation introduced by the Act was the institution of a Bourse register, in which the names of all those who transact stock business on 'Change have to be entered. The object of these restrictions was to prevent gambling

speculations especially on the part of officers and officials. The net result of these restrictions, however, has been to compel German capital to seek a field for its activity abroad, to the detriment of the home market. In a country like Germany, where lotteries are promoted and encouraged by the State, purely paternal regulations of this kind in the case of one of the most important organs of the national economy savor strongly of the grotesque. The measure has always been regarded as a one-sided concession to Agrarian prejudices against purely commercial and industrial interests. Repeated but unavailing efforts have been made by successive Reichstags to mitigate the evils of this systematic restriction. The defective power of resistance which the Bourse exhibited in the face of the recent great crisis on the American railway-market in March has revived the agitation. The migration of German capital to foreign countries in search of profitable investments has reduced the Bourse to a position of dependence upon international constellations. It has, moreover, repeatedly been observed that the inherent weakness of the Berlin Bourse has in its turn given a fresh impetus to downward movements in Wall Street, while the Bourse laws, which have been responsible for the instability of the market, have at the same time been the primary cause of the high Bank rate in Germany. And so the vicious circle has been completed. In this connection attention may be drawn to the steady process of amalgamation which has been in progress in the German banking world, and the imminent disappearance of the smaller banking institutions, with results which have not been altogether beneficent in their influence upon the money-market. Universal as the scarcity and tightness of money have undoubtedly become, it is certain that Germany, with her disorganized finances, her lavish investments abroad and her restrictive Bourse legislation, has not only been responsible for her own financial difficulties, but has also contributed in large measure to the present condition of the international money-market.

Nearly all parties in Germany are agreed that a strong Bourse is a vital necessity from the political and military point of view, as well as upon purely economic grounds. But no two sections of opinion can be found to coincide when it comes to discussing the scope of the proposed reforms. The increased strength of the Agrarian element in the new Reichstag is not calculated to ren-

der the Conservatives more inclined to entertain any proposals for the unconditional repeal of the present restrictions upon Bourse business. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that they may be willing to cooperate in the work of revising the Bourse laws if the clauses in restraint of speculative operations in corn and mill products are left untouched. The German Agricultural Council has already expressed itself in this sense, and Prince von Bülow, while laying stress upon the necessity for a strong and healthy Bourse, has intimated his fundamental sympathy with the attitude of the Agrarians. The lines upon which an eventual compromise between the Conservatives and the Liberals may ultimately be effected are by no means assured. The Conservatives will certainly not consent to the abolition of the Bourse register, although it is suggested that they may so far modify their attitude as to acquiesce in transactions in differences, provided that in the case of non-professional speculators who are not on the register a security is deposited for settlement purposes, beyond the amount of which the creditor in the transaction cannot recover. Some expedient of this kind would satisfy the Agrarians, but whether it would prevent the outflow of capital from Germany is, to say the least, questionable. Authoritative critics, however, are inclined provisionally to accept a compromise of this kind in order as far as possible to give Prince von Bülow his chance of "mating the Conservative with the Liberal spirit." Nevertheless, even this compromise is still far from being acceptable to both parties, and a long time must elapse before the issue of the conflict between the two opposing interests has been determined. Meanwhile, the official Bourse commissary has been sent on a mission to the various foreign capitals in order to study local conditions and to gather material for the proposed amendment of the Bourse laws.

The sphere of social policy is also one in which there continues to be a profound divergence between the Conservative and the Liberal view. German industrialists are becoming seriously disturbed at what they consider to be the hasty and ill-considered manner in which social legislation is being developed. Thus the Associated Industrialists of the Cologne District, in their recent report, warned German industry to be on its guard against what they described as "hypersocial" legislation, and expressed the apprehension that the new Reichstag was even more likely to

indulge in an exaggerated social policy than its predecessor. With the parties and the Government vying with each other in their efforts to gain popular favor, the outlook for industry, from the employers' point of view, is considered depressing, since social reforms are almost invariably introduced at their expense. In their opinion the situation is further aggravated by the fact that the Prussian Government has set the example of introducing a nine-hour day, and regular holidays at full wages, for workmen in the service of the State. The result, it is contended, is that private employers of labor have been placed at a disadvantage, since they have to reckon with competition not only at home but also in foreign countries, where these advanced social views have not yet asserted themselves. Apart from this fact, moreover, the whole character and purpose of private industrial enterprise is different from the nature and objects of State undertakings. These considerations are urged in favor of a more gradual process of social legislation upon the ground that many of the compulsory measures which are being enforced in the guise of so-called reforms would ultimately evolve themselves out of the natural order of things. Above all, it is objected that Germany ought to await social developments in other rival countries before handicapping herself by irrevocable commitments in this sphere.

The Central Association of German Industrials, as well as a number of local chambers of commerce, have repeatedly made representations to the Government and to municipal authorities on the subject of granting concessions to their servants which private employers of labor are not yet prepared to accord. These efforts have so far proved unavailing. Indeed, the Imperial Chancellor lately approached the Central Association with a view to securing its support for his own social policy on Conservative-Liberal lines. One of the first social political measures of the new era is likely to be the enforcement of a universal ten-hour working-day for women instead of that of eleven hours now prevailing. In the South-German cotton and textile trade this reform has already been introduced. In the Cologne district the *maximum* ten-hour day, exclusive of meal-times, is also in operation, and it is generally regarded as being far more compatible with social and industrial requirements than the nine-hour day which obtains in the State railway workshops. The process of industrialization in a State, it is argued, produces its

own reforms in its own good time, and it is pointed out that the demand for labor is the regulating factor both in the reduction of the working hours and in the increase of wages. Increased industrial activity of itself entails a continuous improvement in the conditions of labor.

These questions of social policy, together with other kindred problems, such as that of framing a law which will give scope to employers' associations without unduly strengthening the position of labor-unions, present difficulties which will severely tax the loyalty of the various members of the *Bloc* to each other and to the Government. The insurrection in Southwest Africa has long been at an end, and the "national" issues upon which, with a loud flourish of trumpets, the Reichstag was dissolved last December, stand revealed as a mere farce. The fortuitous combination of Conservatives, Liberals and Radicals, which was used by the Government with the avowed object of teaching the Centre party a lesson, has served its purpose. The question is whether these strange bedfellows, who have been brought together by Prince von Bülow's professed desire to "mate the Conservative with the Liberal spirit," will be able to maintain an unbroken front against the strongest party in the Reichstag, which contains in its ranks some of the most practical of German politicians. Experience so far has shown that the Radicals are a totally untrustworthy quantity. When it suits their purpose to assert themselves against the Government they cheerfully go over to the enemy. And, if the Conservatives decline to cooperate in a purely Radical policy, Prince von Bülow's programme of social reform, vague as it is, stands a chance of proving the still-born offspring of an unnatural alliance. On the other hand, if the *Bloc* makes a practice of trying to outbid the Centre in its social proposals, the Government may find itself forced into a position from which retirement will be difficult.

ST. PETERSBURG, April, 1907.

MEDIAEVAL schoolmen had an axiom to the effect that causes operate in accordance with their nature. And of the present Duma this is manifestly true. The second Russian Parliament consists of a very mixed crowd of ill-assorted individuals, most of whom are themselves sorely in need of elementary instruction, yet who, taken together, are supposed to give light and guidance

to a nation of 150 millions and to change for the better the institutions of the country. Troglodites gathered together to restore an old Gothic Church, would have a much easier task. Like the wedding guests in the Gospel, they are men picked up in the highways and byways who are become legislators in spite of themselves, and might just as well have become astronomers or physicians. There are Russians and Germans, Esthonians and Letts, Poles and Lithuanians, Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, Bashkirs and Ruthenians, all loving their own language and respecting their own traditions. If we classified them by creeds we should find Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Orthodox Christians, Old Believers, Stundists, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Jews. And these are but a few of the divisions. Political shades give rise to more. Many of the deputies, for instance, are men with a past of which they are proud: some have been in prison, others in Siberia, many under police supervision or banished from their native provinces, while a few were exiles abroad; in a word, they and the *régime*, which is also represented in the Duma, have been at daggers' ends too long to regard each other with any feelings but bitter hatred or supreme contempt.

Forty-three per cent. of the deputies are quite uneducated men, who might perhaps make laws for a tiny State like the Republic of San Marino, but are utterly unfitted to legislate for a vast nation like Russia, during one of the most terrible crises that any community has ever undergone. Indeed, they are incapable even of forming an idea of the task set them. Many of them look upon the universe as Homer's contemporaries might have contemplated it, while others could have lived without feeling strange in the days when Christianity was first recommended to Prince Vladimir on the ground of the sweet singing that forms part of its liturgy. It is noteworthy that the larger the percentage of educated members in a party, the more moderate are its views and the more parliamentary its behavior. Thus in the "Octoberist" group, whose programme is identical with that which the Tsar himself enounced in the Charter of October, 1905, not less than 59 per cent. of the members received instruction either at universities or at other high schools. The "Cadets"—as the Constitutional Democrats are called—come next in the matter of schooling and moderation. They were once, last year, on the point of being summoned by the Tsar and commanded to form

a Cabinet. Of the "Cadet" deputies, 45 per cent. have passed through the higher educational establishments, some of them being professors, lawyers, journalists, ex-bureaucrats. More to the Left still stand the deputies of the Labor party, of whom 55 per cent. have no claim to be regarded as educated, and the Social Democrats, of whom just one-half lack intermediate school instruction.

A couple of days ago one of the peasant deputies complained to a journalist in the Duma that he could not make head or tail of the whole business. "We came here to get land," he said, scratching his head in token of despair, "but we are tripped up wherever we turn. Each of us has received mountains of printed documents. Among them are the Finance Minister's estimates, the second half of which contains two thousand pages." "Do you read them?" "Not I. How could I? Why, in three years I could not flounder through all that; and besides, I don't understand anything about it." "Then, why, pray, did they elect you instead of somebody capable of understanding?" "Well, you see, this is how the elections were made. At first we didn't know whom to choose. Then, just before the voting-day, the police made a raid on some of the villagers' houses, seeking for revolvers or bombs. Well, that was enough. Our people elected the men who were suspected by the police."

Now, even if this scratch assembly were willing to prescribe for the ills of the Russian Empire, it could not carry out its intention, because it is not intellectually and morally equipped for the task. Over five hundred individuals, mostly uneducated men, of violent prejudices, sluggish minds and wholly inexperienced in public affairs, cannot be expected, even with the best will in the world, to bring into harmony the conflicting interests of the many nationalities, religions, climates, of which the vast Russian Empire is made up. "Nobody can give what he does not possess," is an adage of the mediæval schoolmen, which is certainly applicable to this case. Then how hopeless the effort to get these political tigers and lambs, wolves, sheep and shepherds, sharks, rhinoceroses, hawks and sparrows to combine and work for an object of which only a few have any understanding, and which even they generally misunderstand!

But the bulk of the deputies themselves are determined not to undertake the task. Like the Irishman who described himself

as sober enough to know that he was not sober, they are quite qualified to see that they are not qualified. And what is more, they would not, even if they could, set their hands to the work. On the contrary, they are bent on doing everything in their power to thwart any efforts that may be made in that direction. And in a matter of this kind it is superlatively true that where there's a will there's a way.

Like most Parliaments, the Duma, despite its thirty-three different parties, may be roughly split up into three sections: the more or less moderate Centre, the conservative Right and the radical Left. Each of these is in turn divisible into groups and fractions, which may, under certain conditions, again fall apart, but for all practical purposes they may be treated as indivisible units. The kernel of the centre is made up of about a hundred Constitutional Democrats, who will probably form the governmental party of the future, but are in opposition to-day. They are mostly enlightened, ambitious men who, while they can count upon no powerful following in the country, have turned the court and government against them by coquetting with revolutionists and truckling to Social Democrats. Putting their trust neither in the princes nor the people, they seek to make up by parliamentary strategy for what they lack in number. They live on their wits, and are therefore not thriving. But they attract the votes now of the Left, now of the Right, and are able at times to wield a powerful influence on the course of the debates. It was thus that they had their own man, M. Golovin, chosen speaker of the House as the result of a compromise by which they gave seven other posts, including those of vice-presidents and secretary, to various fractions of the Left, entirely excluding those of the Right, whose members constitute one-fifth of the Duma. It was ingenious, unjust and successful.

But the "Cadets," who are opportunists, have a political programme which, however, they are quite ready to modify when necessary. Their specific for the present ills of Russia may be summarized thus: "Our programme modified by circumstance and carried out exclusively by ourselves. Men and measures are indispensable, but especially men. And we alone know the magic word." Land expropriation is one of the remedies prescribed by the Cadets and anathematized by the Court.

The "Octoberists" are less radical and much less numerous

than the Constitutional Democrats. Their programme is peaceful development on the lines traced by the Tsar in his Ukase of the 30th October; their chief weakness lies in their lack of organization in the Duma and in the country, and it is intensified by their irresolution, and by their lack of faith in their aims, in themselves, in anything. A third party, which is also looked upon as part of the centre, is composed of the thirty-four Poles, whose ideal is autonomy, whose discipline is exemplary, and whose tactics reveal a degree of political training which is unexampled in Russia.

The Right, like the other two sections, is a composite entity. Part of its members feel drawn towards the Government and willing to uphold M. Stolypin's line of policy, while another part is resolved to frustrate that policy by every means in its power. The latter are reactionaries, who deplore the line of action which led to the granting of a constitution by the Tsar, and place the salvation of the country in a frank return to the autocratic *régime*, quickened perhaps with an infusion of the modern spirit of progress. Among those reactionaries are the anti-Semites of the type of Krushevan and Purishkevitch, who sum up all the hostile forces that encircle and threaten the Russian people in the one word "Jews." Every national catastrophe, every partial calamity, war and famine, trade stagnation and industrial strikes are all the handiwork of the Jews. And these reactionaries have a strong following in the land. It would be strange, indeed, were it otherwise among a population which is still mediæval in superstition and Bœotian in intellectual enlightenment. Foreigners can hardly realize the mental and moral condition of the Russian masses.

The fractions of the United Left are implacable enemies of the Government and the *régime*. Between the two there can be neither peace nor truce. Some among them perhaps would be contented with the peaceful establishment of a democratic republic, but the others want very much more, and are further convinced that nothing worth having can be obtained without violence and bloodshed. The nationalization of land, of capital and machinery, the abolition of the death penalty, and a number of other equally far-reaching changes in the social and political framework of Russia are among the aims of these reformers. Now they are well aware that they can carry these

measures only by force, well organized and actually employed. At the last Duma they imagined that they were already strong enough at least to terrify the Government and force it to evacuate the outworks of the fortress. But when the decree of dissolution was carried out without provoking a rising or even a protest in the provinces, it became evident that they had made a gross miscalculation. This time, therefore, they are aware of their weakness and resolved to run no risks. Their plan is to organize the masses against the Government, and their method consists in spreading subversive doctrines from the tribune of the Duma. Therefore they hold that the existence of the Duma must not be endangered by any such outbreaks of indignation as wrought the destruction of the first Russian Parliament. That is the view taken by the social revolutionists and the Social Democrats; in a word, by all the fractions of the United Left. And everything that has taken place in the Duma since the first sitting was held becomes intelligible and reasonable when interpreted in the light of those tactics.

The first Duma tried to storm the citadel of the Monarchists, the second is resolved to lay siege to it patiently. Ministers were peremptorily summoned to resign by the first batch of deputies; they are being cleverly pressed into the service of the revolution by the second batch. And hitherto they have lent a helping hand right willingly. Indeed, an onlooker, unacquainted with Russian affairs, would be tempted to set down the Tsar's ministers as lukewarm fellow workers of the revolutionists—they offer them such excellent openings and favorable opportunities, and they fall in so readily with the plans of their enemies. And all this is done so cheerfully and deliberately that one is sometimes disposed to assume that the Ministers know what they are about, and have in reserve some magic spell which in the nick of time will change the enemies into friends and helpmates.

Over a month has now elapsed since the Duma first met, but as yet not a bill has been passed or approved, and only the budget has been discussed. But, then, the work of organizing the masses has moved apace, and even the troops are showing signs of the changes which persevering propaganda can effect. The Generals are alarmed and powerless. They see disaffection gnawing the vitals of the army, but they may not do anything against the malady. Countless leaflets and inflammatory appeals—in the

form of speeches delivered in the Duma by inviolable deputies—have been distributed broadcast over the land, and the peasantry, whose respect for the printed word borders on idolatry, is being drawn further and further away from the cause of monarchism and order. If the Duma were not sitting this food of disaffection would be forbidden by the police, but now the very Government helps to distribute it impartially. If that process were continued for a twelvemonth the dynasty which could not, as things now stand, survive the death or deposition of Nicolai Alexandrovitch, would be swept into the limbo of the past, and with it all the traditions, achievements and failures of the monarchical *régime*. And the Tsar's Ministers are working hard to prolong the life of the Duma, which is toiling for that. Even as it is, the revolutionists have advanced their cause perceptibly, and certain of the reactionary changes which the Tsar's Government might have effected without provoking serious troubles after the dissolution of the first Duma have now become impossible.

Every question hitherto raised by the Opposition and discussed by the Duma has been carefully selected with an eye to the opportunity it offers for inflammatory speeches and to the ease with which it may be used as a text without necessitating any such decision as would render a dissolution necessary. After the Premier's official announcement, for example, the first topic debated was whether the Duma should despatch deputies to the provinces to ascertain whether the public corn granaries, which are kept for the purpose of feeding the peasantry in famine years, were full, and if not, why not. But the real object of this proposal was to enable the deputies under cover of inviolability, to travel from place to place preaching rebellion at the public expense. The Constitutional Democrats, whose self-imposed duty it is to keep the balance between the extremes, then proposed not to send commissioners, but to form a committee to study the documents bearing on the subject. And M. Stolypin closed with the suggestion right joyfully. His friends applauded warmly, and his press claimed that he had won a signal victory over the Left. And to some extent that apparent victory has implanted in the Premier's mind the conviction that besides being an orator he is also a parliamentary leader, and can find a *modus vivendi* which will enable him to work with the Duma for the well-being of the nation.

The next topic mooted in the Duma turned upon the military field tribunals, which deal death to murderers with a degree of uncertainty that is truly demoralizing. It was a splendid theme for declamation, and the revolutionary deputies made the most of it. Examples of unfairness, of crying injustice, were given in abundance. But as usual there were true and false. For nothing that is asserted in the Duma or published in the newspapers can be accepted unless confirmed by independent evidence. For example, the Socialist leader, Alexinsky, narrated a case which caused a certain sensation among his hearers. Two Letts in the Baltic Provinces, Kelle and Janson by name, were tried by the field tribunal in January and acquitted, but were kept in prison until March and then shot. That was one tale; the other was just as sensational. And the Russian public still believes them both. As a matter of fact, they are false. The two Letts were not tried in January, but their trial was postponed then. Neither were they shot in March or at any time. They are still alive and in prison. That, however, is but a characteristic detail. Another equally characteristic detail was the challenge thrown by the Prime Minister to the Duma to condemn publicly and solemnly all political assassination, whether as an end or a means. But it was left unanswered. The Duma will not condemn political assassination. And the men who thundered against the death penalty as immoral, inhuman and intolerable, refused to raise their voices against the cruel murders of thousands of citizens who care nothing for politics and crave only for a life of peaceful activity. The main point throughout this debate was the facility which it offered for appeals made to the revolutionary elements of the nation over the heads of the deputies.

How to find work for the unemployed was the next riddle propounded to the Chamber. Some members asked that the State should bind itself to pay every operative who has nothing to do one-half his wages while out of work. Others made other proposals hardly more practical. The Premier pointed out that wanton strikes were at the bottom of much of the misery that now prevails in the Empire, and he instanced the crews of the Caspian steamers who have refused to go back to work until their employers accede to a number of demands, some of which are preposterous. For example, seamen shall be allowed to rest from work of all kind on Sundays and holy days—of which Russia

has more than her share—even when the steamers are sailing! But nobody paid attention to M. Stolypin's warning that these and similar strikes would work the ruin of Russian trade and industry. For that entire discussion, as well as the debates on the agrarian question, had but one object, to enable the revolutionary members to inspirit their followers in the country.

As the key-word of the aims of the Duma is notoriously the organization of the masses in the provinces against the Government, it is worthy of remark that the Premier should be constantly on the alert for every fresh device by which he may save the Parliament from destruction. His solicitude is touching, almost tragical. For M. Stolypin is a man without guile, whose word is an adequate exponent of his intentions, and whose intentions emanate from patriotic considerations. On his part there can be no question of mental reservation. All the more amazing is the line of action he is pursuing. The dispassionate onlooker cannot but feel that while the Duma is demonstrating its unwillingness to legislate, the Cabinet is proving its incapacity for governing the nation.

The centre of gravity is therefore in the country. And the country is moving towards revolution and anarchy uninterruptedly. The students of high schools have proclaimed publicly that, imitating the tactics of the Duma, they will strive to keep the universities open as revolutionary centres and sanctuaries, beyond the threshold of which the police may not penetrate. They will do everything but study there. Crimes against property and person are increasing in number and in cruelty. In some districts the peasants have cut down wood, rifled mansions, fought skirmishes with the police or the troops, leaving over twenty dead on the field. Human life has fallen enormously in value. Here is an extract from one day's telegrams in the morning paper: "*Kharkoff*.—Last night the university was surrounded by Cossacks and police. The latter, entering, found three illegal meetings going on, in which about 100 outsiders were taking part. *Grodno*.—At eleven o'clock on the night of the 16th eighteen prisoners escaped from the gaol by breaking down the stone wall, climbing up the spout to the roof and letting themselves down by strips of linen sheet. *Lodz*.—On the night of the 15th the police, entering the lodging of Kopcheffsky to make a search, were met by five men who emptied their revolvers at them. Three

policemen fell wounded. *Cherkassy*.—In the village Khlipovka the priest has been robbed. His daughter was dishonored before his eyes. He died on the spot of heart paralysis. His wife went mad. *Vladimir*.—Five hundred drunken peasants gutted a tavern. After unavailing exhortations to disperse the crowd, the police fired. Ten men were wounded, eight died. Order is restored.”

But few incidents could characterize the lawlessness of the country and the demoralization of the people more fully than the wanton murder of the ex-Deputy Yollo in the very centre of Moscow in the broad daylight. Yollo was not only a harmless politician, he was a man of warm impulse, generous inspiration and great learning. A member of the Cadet party, he was moderate and straightforward, modest and retired. His murder could do nobody any good. It was obviously calculated to discredit irremediably the party to which it could be brought home, so obviously that no party wicked enough to conceive such a crime would be stupid enough to perpetrate it. The revolver-shot was fired at the gate of a house in which a press organ of the extreme reactionary Right is published. But that party—which has publicly condemned assassination—could gain absolutely nothing by this murder, which the revolutionists at once accused them of having plotted. The authorities who are investigating the dastardly crime have arrested three persons on suspicion—but all three have turned out to be revolutionary agents. And now the conservatives’ heart is made glad, and the revolutionists are accused of having hired assassins to do Yollo to death in order to hold up the extreme Right, which alone supports the Government, to the execration of the world. Whichever of these charges proves founded is immaterial to the outsider. The significant fact is that such revolting crimes should be thoroughly threshed out in such businesslike fashion by professional politicians.

Happily there are also moral and religious forces at work in the country, as yet hardly noticeable to the outsider, but none the less powerful.* And they are growing fast. These may perhaps yet infuse the ichor of ethical life into the veins of the diseased nation. But of such elements there is no sign in the Duma, many of whose deputies merely darken counsel by words. And from the second Duma, constituted as it is, little else than words can be reasonably expected.